



Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at <http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content>.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

NEW BOOKS REVIEWED

SOME MODERN FRENCH WRITERS. By G. Turquet-Milnes. New York: Robert M. McBride & Company.

In estimating the various writers (some of them little known, except by name, to American readers) that Mr. Turquet-Milnes has presented for our consideration, it is obviously advantageous to adhere to some general point of view. This point of view the author has found in Bergsonism; the influence of Bergson is, as his subtitle indicates, the key which he uses to open up the significance of writers as diverse as Anatole France and Paul Claudel.

Philosophy makes hard criticism; it is not easy to be philosophically profound and critically illuminating at the same time. In this case, the writer labors under the special difficulty that Bergsonism is at once a metaphysics as subtle and as logical as Hegel's and a popular philosophy, a more or less pervasive influence, like Rousseauism or Christian Science. The reader has to know precisely what Bergson means—has to grasp the tenuous distinction between time and pure duration, for example;—but then he has to trace the *effect* of the Bergsonian doctrines, as these are grasped, or partially grasped, by various minds, filtered through several temperaments, and worked over into diverse literary forms. Part of the time, one is trying to appreciate Jules Romains or Jean Moréas in the light of contemporary ideas, much as one might essay to understand Swift in the light of eighteenth-century thinking; but part of the time, also, one finds oneself constrained to look upon poets or novelists of delicate genius as more or less self-conscious expositors of the Bergsonian views and to criticize them *as disciples of Bergson*.

In dealing with this more or less unavoidable difficulty, the author has been reasonably successful. He succeeds in being fairly comprehensive and occasionally trenchant. He has helped to explain Bergson, and he has said some good things about the other writers of whom he treats. On the whole, however, he has given us a "popular," though sufficiently learned, setting forth of his theme—a discourse plausible and stimulating, but lacking the clearness which thorough-going criticism possesses. There would seem to be, at times, a little too much bias in favor of what may be called the fashionable philosophical trend. "This man is a Bergsonist," the author seems to say; "therefore he stands at or near the front of the modern movement; he is significant; he is to be accepted." This is not to say that Mr. Turquet-Milnes fails to comment upon personal traits, or to bring forward, now and then, certain distinctive literary qualities.

What one understands by it all is that modern French literature is domi-

nated by a tendency partly mystical (or at least anti-intellectual and opposed to the exclusive dominance of science), and partly pragmatic. This is, of course, a condition common to most western nations to-day. One can approach the study of it through the study of Bergson or Maeterlinck (the mystical approach), or through the study of William James (the practical approach). If one is familiar with this general movement, all that he needs to do, in order to obtain a broad understanding of the French literary outlook, is to reckon with the French tendency to *cultism*.

Obviously, the Bergsonist or Pragmatic point of view does not mean attachment to a rigid philosophic system, but rather release of temperament—temperament backed by skepticism, fortified by faith. Thus there arises the greatest facility in the expression of individual beliefs and in the formation of cults—a process as characteristic of French literature as of French politics. Radical empiricism, in Clemenceau, may work into a bitter cynicism; skepticism in Anatole France may be easily united with a refined and restrained Hellenism; creative evolution may without a pang give birth to the traditionalism of Barrès or to the *Unanimisme* of Jules Romains.

Perhaps modern thought—and modern French thought, in particular—is right in its mistrust of reason as man's chief organ of adaptation to the Universe. It cannot be denied, however, that reliance upon intuition gives rise to some strange and dreamlike vagaries. On the whole, one prefers the French vagaries. To the Anglo-Saxon mind, the French, if they seem less mature than we are in their abounding faith *in a point of view*, seem to manifest a maturity greater than ours in the subtle logic, in the unblinking knowledge of life, with which they draw out its particular implications.

ROMAIN ROLLAND. By Stefan Zweig. Translated from the original manuscript by Eden and Cedar Paul. New York: Thomas Seltzer.

Any reasonably adequate book about Romain Rolland could hardly fail to be interesting, and the point of view of a fervent apostle is not, of course, to be excluded. It cannot be said, however, that the recent volume by Stefan Zweig is of much value either as criticism or as literary biography. It does succeed in adumbrating the fact that Rolland is a great human being, a man whose soul is more capacious than the souls of most of us. Rolland, says the author, with quite pardonable exaggeration, is "the voice of Europe in the season of its most poignant agony. He has become the conscience of the world." Of course, rhetorical phrases like this are susceptible of so many meanings that it would be unfair to submit them to definite criticism; but one may suggest that if any one may claim to have been (or to have expressed) "the conscience of the world," that man is Cardinal Mercier rather than the romantic Rolland.

Further, the author brings out the resemblance to Tolstoi and the direct influence of the latter upon Rolland. It is just to say that both these men